

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 1-A

WASHINGTON TIMES
6 June 1985

Rebels opposing Marxist regimes in 4 nations unite

By Michael Sullivan
THE WASHINGTON TIMES FOREIGN SERVICE

JAMBA, Angola — Four guerrilla groups fighting to replace Marxist governments in Asia, Africa and Latin America have forged a historic anti-Soviet coalition at the bush headquarters of UNITA, Angola's anti-Marxist resistance movement.

Key anti-Marxist resistance figures gathered here included Adolfo Calero, head of the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, the largest anti-Sandinista guerrilla group, which operates from bases in Honduras; and Jonas Savimbi, who heads UNITA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola.

Other resistance groups represented included Afghanistan's mujahideen and the Ethnic Liberation Organization of Laos.

Citizens for America, a conservative Washington-based lobby, helped organize the three-day session. Lewis Lehrman, CFA chairman, who unsuccessfully ran for New York governor in 1982, read a personal message from President Reagan that said of the resistance forces, "Their goals are our goals."

"Around the world we see people joining together to get control of their own affairs and to free their nations from outside domination and an alien ideology. It is a global trend, and one of the most hopeful of our times," President Reagan said.

The new coalition called its meeting the First Conference of Armed Movements Fighting Against Soviet Expansion.

A declaration set out the establishment of a "Democratic International" similar to the "internationales" established by Moscow to impose Marxist governments. The participants pledged unity in their joint struggles in "the fight for independence from Soviet colonialism."

"The Soviets and the communists have shown the way," said Mr. Calero, who spent three days in Jamba meeting with Mr. Savimbi and viewing UNITA's military and social organization.

Despite the direct message to him from the president, Mr. Lehrman said there was no direct U.S. or White House support for the confer-

ence. Mr. Lehrman said there had been no contact with the State Department and he saw no contradiction between the meeting and Washington's policy of "constructive engagement" to negotiate a withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola.

Mr. Lehrman presented each delegate with a framed copy of the Declaration of Independence and spoke of the need to uphold such values as faith, family, freedom and fidelity of the Republic.

Mr. Savimbi, in his opening statement, warned against outsiders prescribing solutions or courses of action to indigenous rebel movements.

"If you prescribe, you can't have UNITA on your side — because you will fail," Mr. Savimbi said.

He stressed that each group must establish a strong base in its own

country, because, with outside allies, he said, "allegiances shift."

Of conservatives, he said: "You tell us we are formidable chaps, but when we leave you say Africa is a lost continent..."

"We want you to understand our mind, if you are our friend."

The meeting, according to the delegates, was primarily a political gesture, but there were hopes that further contact would follow, and a Secretariat is to be established in Washington.

"The first gesture of solidarity is to make the people of the United States understand the struggle of all these people," Mr. Calero said.

Of the success UNITA has had, Mr. Calero said, "they have given us inspiration that the Cubans can be beaten."

UNITA has kept fighting the government of Angola despite the support of Luanda by some 30,000 Cuban troops.

Conference organizers said increasing support and legitimacy for the Contras, as the Nicaraguan resistance is also known, was a major feature of the meeting.

Congress is debating on a revived aid package to the Nicaraguan resistance, and Mr. Calero predicted it will pass this time.

Since the cutoff of U.S. funding last year, the Nicaraguan guerrillas have received approximately \$10 million from private sources.

Among the guerrilla groups, UNITA clearly was the most impressive, with the largest and best organization and its hold on one-third of Angola. It was the only group with a truly "liberated zone" under its control.

The other delegates clearly were impressed with what they were shown here in Jamba: a military parade, an infantry combat course with live-fire exercises and mock

attack, hospitals, workshops and schools.

"Afghans are brave," said Haroon Wardak, who, along with his father, Col. Ghuram Wardak, represented Afghanistan's guerrillas, "but they are selfish. Everyone wants to be a leader."

Col. Wardak cited the major failings among Afghanistan's splintered resistance as a lack of organization and discipline.

Organizers said Afghan guerrilla leaders representing several groups had been detained in Pakistan last week as they left for the conference. They said Pakistani authorities had given no reason for holding the three men.

In addition, one organizer said, the Mozambique National Resistance had been invited but was prevented from accepting by South Africa, which withdrew support for the MNR last year.

Another invited group, the Khmer People's National Liberation Front, was unable to attend, but leader Son Sann sent a message of "solidarity."

The Laotian delegation, led by Pa Kao Her, a Hmong tribesman, said the meeting was "meaningful for political reasons," but he said he had learned little practical information.

The Lao organization claims a following of about 8,000 fighters, and Mr. Her said its troops receive training and direct support primarily from China.

More than 2,000 men have been trained in China, he said, but his group has refused outside advisers.